

NEW MEMBERS INDUCTED INTO COMPETITIVE DEVELOPMENT GROUP PROGRAM

YG97 Graduates Also Honored

Sandra R. Marks

Introduction

The annual Competitive Development Group (CDG) Orientation, hosted by the Acquisition Career Management Office (ACMO), was held Aug. 8-9, 2000, in Springfield, VA. The orientation provided a forum for members of CDG Year Groups (YGs) 97, 98, 00, and 01 to interact with their colleagues, gain information on Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) initiatives, familiarize themselves with the policies and procedures of the program, and seek guidance in their development as future AAC leaders from staff members of the ACMO and the Army Acquisition Executive Support Agency (AAESA). The orientation culminated with the first-ever commencement ceremony honoring the initial CDG graduates, YG97.

The following 25 individuals in YG01 were inaugurated into the 3-year career development program: Henry Alexander, Daniel Belk, Hari Bezwada, Deborah Chambers, Brian Churchman, David Duda, Eric Edwards, William Ellis Jr., Bernard Gajkowski, Duane Gotvald, Ross Guckert, Clarence Hamilton, Timothy Hughes, Robert Jamison, Angela Kielsmeier, Mike Lawrence, Allen Poole, Deborah Schumann, Dennis Simpson, Cassandra Smith, Robert Thomas, Stephen Tkac, Beverly Wasniewski, Diane Williams, and Kenneth Wright.

In addition, the following six military officers were inducted into the CDG Program under the newly created AAC CDG Military Cohort Program: MAJ Cris Boyd, MAJ Jeannette Jones, MAJ Steven Noe,

MAJ Kenneth Payne, MAJ Matthew Rioridan, and MAJ Frank Steinbugl. (For more information on this program, see the sidebar on Page 35.)

Program Overview

The orientation began with a series of sessions geared to providing an overview of the CDG Program and relating its importance to the AAC vision as a whole. COL Roger Carter, then both Acting Deputy

Director for Acquisition Career Management (DDACM) and ACMO Director, formally welcomed YG01 to the orientation. (Carter retired from the Army this past September.) As a whole, Carter said, the CDG Program is the epitome of what the acquisition leadership preaches in broadening and producing flexible leaders for the future. There's no greater proof of the worth of a program, he added, than by the leadership wanting you, identifying positions where you can serve, and then promoting you into positions of higher responsibility.

Mary Thomas, then ACMO Deputy Director, dissected components of the AAC vision as they relate to building future leaders. As the ambassadors of the Acquisition Corps, Thomas said, the CDG is the best example of how the AAC vision works. The development of leadership attributes underpins the foresight of the AAC, she added, and leadership capabilities enhance the AAC's contribution to our most important customer—the warfighter. On the topic of leadership competencies, Thomas switched her focus to the Acquisition Career Development Plan (ACDP) and career development models. Thomas called the ACDP an easy method for structuring one's career. It provides a framework to create a career progression map that guides Army Acquisition Workforce (AAW) members from a level of functional expertise to being able to apply the leadership competencies required for leadership positions. It also provides the information and tools necessary to assist AAW members in achieving success at all levels, a key initiative in the CDG Program.



Laverne Kidd, ACM for the southern and western regions

Karen Walker, AAESA Director, briefly reviewed how AAESA operates as the Army Acquisition Executive's agent for military supremacy and life-cycle management of weapons and information systems. Walker also discussed how AAESA was formed, its missions, its organizational structure, and what it does for the people assigned to it. In outlining future initiatives, Walker said AAESA is committed to continued input to the Total Army Analysis process, transferring maintenance of the Acquisition Position Lists from ACMO to AAESA, handling position management, and developing a strategic plan to plot AAESA's course during the next 10 years.

Training Sessions

The next series of sessions focused on identifying the players and procedures that CDG members will encounter in the CDG Program. Carolyn Creamer, Civilian Personnel Management Specialist in AAESA's Personnel Management Division, presented an overview on the three regional acquisition offices, a new initiative that will simplify transitioning CDGs onto the AAESA Table of Distribution and Allowances. (The regional offices work closely with Acquisition Career Managers (ACMs) and Acquisition Career Management Advocates and are responsible for career development and regional workforce management.) Under this new initiative, each CDG member will be assigned an acquisition regional office, and the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center serving that office will take care of all personnel actions. Another new initiative Creamer discussed was "locator cards,"



Sandy Long, National Capital Regional Director

a method that allows CDG members to routinely update their location so they continue receiving vital information by e-mail.

Junius Wright, Budget Officer in AAESA's Resource Management (RM) Division, described his division's role as ACMO's accountant and financial advisor. The RM Division, he said, provides necessary funding information to ACMO management. Wright explained the procedures for processing fund certifications for travel orders and training and how to prepare permanent change of station (PCS) orders. He added that maintaining updated individual development plans (IDPs) will help expedite the approval process for training requests.

CDG members are centrally managed by the ACMs in the Acquisition Management Branch (AMB) of the U.S. Total Army Personnel Command. Gail Dinicolantonio, then ACM for the northeast and central regions, and Laverne Kidd, ACM for the southern and western regions, summarized the role of AMB in supporting AAC members, CDG members, and those who occupy critical acquisition positions. ACMs at AMB provide career management counseling, update Acquisition Career Record Briefs, maintain the Career Management Information File, perform AAC membership reviews, and oversee the processing of certifications. Additionally, for CDGs specifically, they offer slating and placement assistance, assist in IDP development, provide training registration and prioritization, and act as the liaison between the AAESA RM Division and the ACMO. Disseminating information on job and training opportunities and new AAC programs is one of AMB's most important responsibilities. To ensure this AMB benefit, Kidd encouraged CDG members to maintain frequent contact with their ACM, keep their locator cards and Acquisition Career Record Briefs current, and provide AMB feedback on assignments and programs.

For many YG01 members, entering the CDG Program meant their first exposure to the Civilian Acquisition Workforce Personnel Demonstration Project. A training session on the Contribution-based Compensation and Appraisal System (CCAS), the evaluation system used in the demo project, was presented by Jerry Lee, a Senior Analyst with Science Applications International



The initial CDG graduates, YG97, are shown with LTG Paul J. Kern, AAC Director, who is on the far left, and COL Roger Carter, then Acting DDACM and ACMO Director, who is on the far right.



YG01 CDG inductees

Corp. (SAIC), who supports the ACMO relative to implementation of the demo project. Lee began by describing the career paths and broadband levels, evaluation standards, and the scoring system, and demonstrated the formula for converting a GS grade to a demo salary and broadband level. Lee also covered various pay range concepts, the pay pool compensation process, and CCAS evaluation forms.

Sandy Long, National Capital Regional Director (now also Acting ACMO Director), supplemented Lee's presentation with a luncheon briefing that further described the forms used in the CCAS process, the personnel involved in the review process, and the tasks required to complete the evaluation process itself.

"Growing Leaders For The 21st Century" was the title of an interactive training session that focused on leadership competencies and preparations for career advancement. Sharon Senecal, a Management Training Consultant with 32 years of federal government service experience, engaged the audience in numerous exercises designed to assess one's strengths and weaknesses, identify personal career goals, raise external awareness to current issues and themes, and to recognize the importance of mentors.

At the conclusion of training sessions and at varying intervals throughout the orientation, time was allocated for updating IDPs and receiving career management guidance and counseling from the ACMs.



LTG Paul J. Kern, Director, Army Acquisition Corps

Recognition Dinners

YG01 members were recognized during a Tuesday evening dinner honoring their selection for the program. Guest speaker Keith Charles, Acting Director, Acquisition Education, Training, and Career Development, Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition Reform, focused on the topics of the changing workforce and leadership. Charles addressed changes in

federal workforce demographics, in workforce education and skill requirements, and in the basic federal workforce culture. New employees, he added, will have different employment options, different career expectations, and will be expected to lead and be multifunctional. Charles urged CDG members to choose an organization that has a mission they believe in and seek challenging assignments. Ultimately, he concluded, employees are responsible for their own career development. Following Charles' speech, YG01 members were presented a citation, an AAC coin, and a CDG pin signifying their accession into the program.

The CDG orientation culminated with a ceremonious commencement dinner Wednesday evening to honor YG97 on its completion of the 3-year program. Guest speaker LTG Paul J. Kern, Army Acquisition Corps Director, gave a spirited address outlining some of the challenges facing the CDG graduates as future leaders of the Acquisition Workforce. The CDG Program, Kern said, is about developing the people who are going to be able to take the Army into the future. YG97 in particular, he said, exemplifies what our future leaders should be, adding that the other CDG groups can look to them for inspiration. Kern cautioned that leading complex programs often places demands on a person's technical and contracting expertise, operational experience, and one's ability to deal with people. However, he encouraged the group to always "keep their eye on the objective," to equip, train, and prepare the soldiers of the future.

CDG MILITARY COHORT PROGRAM

The Competitive Development Group (CDG) Military Cohort Program, which was established by the Deputy Director for Acquisition Career Management (DDACM), gives eligible military officers, grade O-4, an opportunity to train concurrently with AAC civilian CDG members, thus strengthening the relationship between civilian and military AAC professionals. Military personnel will have the same benefits and responsibilities as their civilian counterparts; however, they will not participate in rotational assignments.

The selection process begins with the Total Army Personnel Command's Acquisition Management Branch (AMB), which identifies no more than 10 officers, grade O-4, to participate in the program based on

nominations from the field. (Please note, this process will begin with the selection of YG02 CDG Military Cohort Program participants.) AMB selection criteria include successful completion of staff and acquisition assignments and high academic achievement in advanced civil schooling. The DDACM, who has program oversight, has final approval authority on AMB recommendations. The program is managed by the Acquisition Career Management Office (ACMO) Director, who provides guidance on Individual Development Plans, defines program requirements, and develops and manages budget and training allocations.

For more information on the program, contact Maria Holmes in the ACMO at (703) 604-7113, DSN 664-7113, e-mail maria.holmes@sarda.army.mil.

Conclusion

The CDG Program orientation once again proved to be a great success both for YG01 members transitioning into the program and for YGs seeking further guidance to develop their leadership competencies.

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